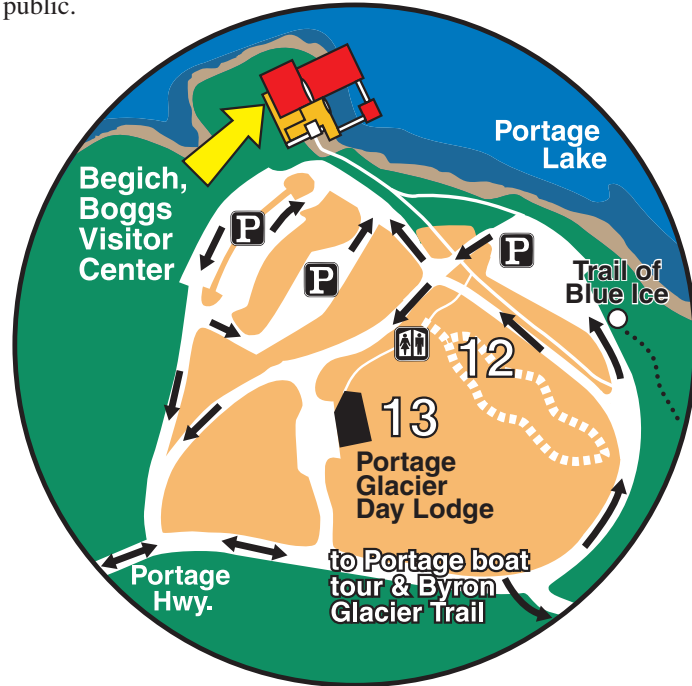


Begich, Boggs Visitor Center

Opened to the public in 1986, and rededicated with new exhibits in 2001, the Begich, Boggs Visitor Center is built upon the terminal moraine left behind by Portage Glacier in 1914.

The visitor center offers an unique opportunity to learn about the Chugach National Forest, America’s second largest national forest.

Award-winning exhibits, educational presentations, the film “Voices from the Ice,” information services, and an Alaska Natural History Association bookstore are available to serve the public.



BEGICH, BOGGS VISITOR CENTER HOURS		
	Summer	Winter
Sunday	9 a.m. - 6 p.m.	10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Monday	9 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Closed
Tuesday	9 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Closed
Wednesday	9 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Closed
Thursday	9 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Closed
Friday	9 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Closed
Saturday	9 a.m. - 6 p.m.	10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Summer hours begin on Memorial Day weekend and run through the end of September. Winter hours subject to change due to weather closures. Call (907) 783-2326 (Begich, Boggs Visitor Center) or (907) 783-3242 (Glacier Ranger District) for the current hours of operation.

Points of Interest

Portage Valley offers visitors a lot to see and do, from hiking and camping, to fishing, wildlife viewing and photography. Here are a few places you won’t want to miss!

1. Moose Flats Day Use Area

A great spot to stop and have a picnic, enjoy a 1/2 mile walk on the interpretive boardwalk trail, or do a little trout fishing.
2. Alder Pond

Try your luck or practice your technique at this trout fishing location.
3. Explorer Glacier Viewing Area

This area offers a great view of Explorer Glacier. Keep a lookout for signs of beaver activity in the area.

4. Tangle Pond

Another trout fishing location in the valley.
5. Black Bear Campground

A 13-site campground designed for tent and small RV camping. Cleared sites, campfire rings, bear-proof dumpster, bear-proof food containers, water pump, picnic tables and outhouses. No hookups or dump station.
6. Williwaw Fish Viewing Platform

Late July through early September you can see salmon traveling up the creek to spawn. Species normally seen are red (sockeye), chum (dog), and pink (humpy). Williwaw Nature Trail starts here. This easy 1/2 mile trail connects the viewing platform to Williwaw ponds. The creek near the trail is closed to salmon fishing.

7. Williwaw Campground

A 60-site fully accessible campground designed for RV and tent camping. Paved sites with pull-through style parking pads, campfire rings, bear-proof dumpsters, hand-water pumps, outhouses, picnic tables and bear-proof food containers. No hookups or dump station.
8. Williwaw Ponds

Trout fishing opportunities exist.
9. Byron Glacier Trail

An easy to moderate trail along Byron Creek to the snowfield at the foot of Byron Glacier. Avalanche danger exists throughout winter and into spring. Length: 0.8 miles (rough trail surface). Time: one hour round trip. Elevation gain: 100 ft.

10. Portage Glacier Tours

Hour long tours of Portage Lake to Portage Glacier, operated by Holland America under a special use permit with the Forest Service. Forest Service interpreters provide narration during each trip. Cruise operates from mid-May through mid-September. For information on trip times, ticket prices and reservations call: (907) 783-2983.
11. Portage Pass Trail

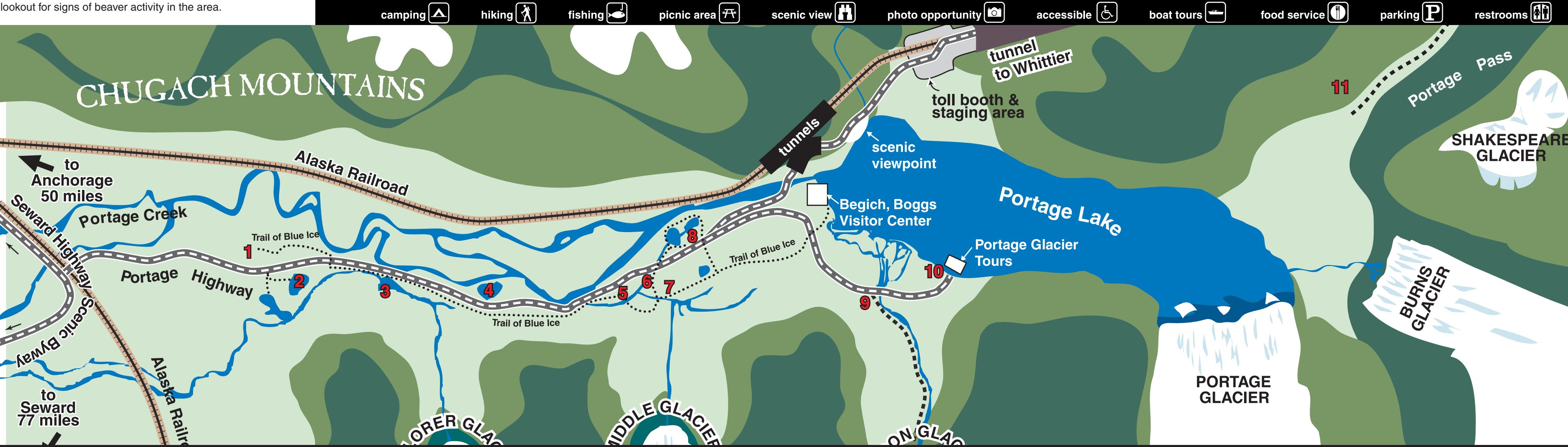
Trail starts on the Whittier side of the tunnel. This moderate trail leads to Portage Pass with spectacular views of Portage Lake and Glacier, and the surrounding sub-alpine terrain. Length: 1 mile. Time: One-two hours. Elevation gain: 750 feet. Tunnel schedule information is available by calling (907) 566-2244 from Anchorage or toll-free (877) 611-2586.

12. Gary Williams Nature Trail

(see circular map)
An easy, self-guided trail showing glacial effects upon the landscape. Length: 1/4 mile loop. Time: 20 minutes. Elevation gain: 25 ft.
13. Portage Glacier Lodge

(see circular map)
Privately owned gift shop and restaurant operated year around under special use permit from the Forest Service. For more information, please call (907) 783-3117.

If you plan on fishing, be sure to check the Alaska Department of Fish and Game’s fishing regulations before you go.



For more information about
Portage Valley please contact:

**Begich, Boggs Visitor Center
Glacier Ranger District**
PO Box 129, Girdwood, AK 99587
(907) 783-2326 or (907) 783-3242
or
Chugach National Forest
3301 C Street, Suite 300
Anchorage, AK 99503
(907) 743-9500
www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach



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Glaciers

These rivers of ice remind us of times long past. Yet, today, these icy giants continue to exert their influence on the land. Their effects can be seen throughout South-central Alaska. Some of the more common signs of glacial activity include:

U-shaped valleys

Rocks embedded along the sides and bottom of the glacier create the same erosive qualities as a large piece of sandpaper, scouring the mountainside. This, along with silt and gravel deposited by the glacier, create steep-walled, flat-bottomed (or U-shaped) valleys like Portage.

Moraines

Large piles of rock and debris are deposited by glaciers as they flow down, or retreat from, valleys. In fact, the visitor center is built on a terminal (end) moraine that was deposited by Portage Glacier between the late 1890s and 1914, when it began its most recent retreat.

Silt

The unique milky blue coloration of Portage Lake and Portage Creek is due to the silt or rock flour that stays suspended in the water. As glaciers move over the landscape, the rocks they pick up along the way grind against the mountainsides, creating the fine dust-like particles.

Why is the Ice Blue?

Glacier ice is formed under the weight of countless snowfalls, which squeezes out most of the air, leaving dense, compact ice. Sunlight, or white light, is made up of all the colors of the spectrum — with each color having a different amount of energy. In regular ice, like the ice in your freezer, the air bubbles scatter the light — creating the white appearance. When sunlight strikes glacier ice, the lower energy colors are absorbed by the ice and only the blue color, which has the most energy, is reflected back to the eye!

Did you know?

Before Portage and Burns Glaciers began their latest retreats, early traders, miners, and indigenous peoples traveled across these glaciers using them as a 'portage' between Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet. Today, the railroad and tunnel to Whittier provide this important transportation link for people.

The Visitor Center is named after Congressmen Nick Begich of Alaska and Hale Boggs of Louisiana. They, along with their pilot Don Jonz, and congressional aide Russel L. Brown, disappeared in 1972 en route to Juneau from Anchorage. They were last heard from as they flew over Portage Pass. No sign of the men or their plane has ever been found.



Watchable Wildlife



Portage Valley is a wild place! From the tiniest of shrews to the largest Alaskan moose - many creatures call Portage Valley home. With a few tips, some patience, and a little luck, you'll be able to make your wildlife encounters enjoyable and memorable.

- **Be considerate of wildlife.**
- **Use binoculars, spotting scopes, and telephoto lenses for the best views.**
- **Keep a safe distance between you and any wildlife - be alert for changes in the animal's behavior that may indicate that you're too close!**
- **Never feed wild animals — it's dangerous for you and the animals!**
- **Keep your pets under control — it's best to leave them at home or in your vehicle.**
- **When hiking with pets always keep them on leashes.**
- **Harassing wild animals for any reason is never OK — it is against the law!**
- **To know where to look for wildlife, learn where they live.**
- **Remember most species aren't going to be active during the middle of the day - you may need to adjust your schedule to fit theirs.**
- **Wildlife can be seen anywhere, at anytime, but it requires patience and a little luck.**



These animals live in Portage Valley. Which have you seen?

AIR

- ☐ black-billed magpie
- ☐ bald eagle
- ☐ fox sparrow
- ☐ Wilson's warbler
- ☐ orange-crowned warbler
- ☐ golden-crowned sparrow
- ☐ common redpoll
- ☐ ruby-crowned kinglet
- ☐ Steller's jay
- ☐ common merganser
- ☐ common goldeneye

LAND

- ☐ moose
- ☐ brown bear
- ☐ black bear
- ☐ mountain goat
- ☐ beaver

LAND (continued)

- ☐ porcupine
- ☐ short-tailed weasel
- ☐ coyote
- ☐ grey wolf
- ☐ hoary marmot
- ☐ snowshoe hare
- ☐ red squirrel
- ☐ red-backed vole
- ☐ common shrew

WATER

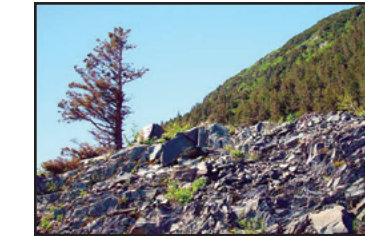
- ☐ Dolly Varden
- ☐ rainbow trout
- ☐ pink (humpy) salmon
- ☐ red (sockeye) salmon
- ☐ silver (coho) salmon
- ☐ chum (dog) salmon



WILDLIFE CHECKLIST

Wild Weather

Due to its location, Portage Valley is host to a variety of wild weather situations. As clouds rise over the Chugach and Kenai mountains they drop lots of rain and snow on the mountains below. So even though it may be sunny in Anchorage only 55 miles away there may be gale force winds driving heavy rains in Portage Valley.



Strong winds in Portage Valley create flag trees; branches only grow on the side out of the wind.

Portage Pass is a narrow land bridge between Prince William Sound and Turnagain Arm. As the air pressure between the two areas equalizes, extremely high winds can be created. These winds have snapped 50 foot flagpoles like twigs, peeled away asphalt, and lifted boxcars from the railroad tracks.

Play It Safe And Enjoy Your Stay

-  Be prepared for quick changes in weather. Heavy rain/snow and strong winds can occur at any time. Keep yourself warm and dry to avoid hypothermia.
-  Keep in mind that medical help is far away! Avoid dangerous situations by having the proper equipment and experience necessary to tackle the adventure you have planned.
-  Stay off the lake ice in the winter. Periods of freezing and thawing throughout the winter make the ice very unstable.
-  Avalanche danger exists in Portage Valley even in the summer months. Be aware of your surroundings and know how to evaluate conditions.
-  Don't approach wildlife! Make noise when hiking, especially in brushy areas, and learn how to handle an encounter with a wild animal.
-  Be alert for moose and bear that may bolt out in front of your vehicle.

USDA
US
R10-RC-159 revised

welcome to
**PORTAGE
VALLEY**

CHUGACH NATIONAL FOREST • PORTAGE, ALASKA